



# Architecture and Court Cultures of the Fourteenth Century

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Recent scholarship has argued that the thirteenth century was a turning point in world history, when the creation of a Mongol empire stretching from China to Iran caused not only great devastation but was part of the formation of a world system extending the length of the Eurasian landmass (Abu-Lughod 1989). Other scholars have argued that Islam itself could be seen as a world system, one whose complex of social relations was greatly strengthened from the thirteenth century onwards by the spread of Sufi orders (Voll 1994). Until the emergence of the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century began to weaken it, several interlinked economic systems comprised this world system. It was dominated by the Middle East heartland with land routes stretching across Mongol Asia, with subsystems of the Mediterranean basin, the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and China.

Scholarship in Islamic art on this period is usually fragmented on geographic or dynastic lines, but a broader perspective on the period can be useful both in differentiating it from earlier centuries and in highlighting cultural connections to parallel economic ones. With the Mongols' extinction of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258, the former *de facto* political fragmentation of the Islamic world was cemented, with fewer dynasties even paying lip-service to the idea of unified caliphal authority. The arrival of the Mongols brought immediate Chinese artistic influences that only partially penetrated western Islamic lands. But with their conversion to Islam the spread of the religion reached central China in substantial numbers for the first time.

For most of the fourteenth century much of the Muslim world was controlled by four dynasties, the Marinids in the west (1217–1465), the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria (1250–1517), the Ilkhanids in Iran (1256–1335), and the Tughluqs in India (1320–1401). By the end of the century the Timurids (1370–1507) had emerged as dominant in most of the area formerly ruled by the Ilkhanids. This chapter will focus on these dynasties, and in particular on the wealthiest and most active patrons, the Mamluks and Mongols, including their rivalry for prestige (O'Kane 1996).

The large amounts of territory ruled over by all these dynasties meant that substantial revenues from trade and agriculture were available for state patronage, frequently expressed in architecture. Beyond that, what connections existed between these geographically disparate areas? To a major extent, all were outsiders. The Marinids were from the Berber-speaking Zanata tribe, the Mamluks were Turkish-speaking, imported as slaves and manumitted; the Ilkhanids, in the period we are considering, recently converted Mongolian-speaking nomads; the Timurids Turkish-speaking nomads, and the Tughluqs, Turkish- (and Persian-) speaking former amirs, ruling over a territory the bulk of whose population was non-Muslim. All therefore needed legitimization, and conspicuous architectural construction, whether to display might through imposing buildings, to cement relations with the ulama (the religious classes) by the sponsorship of mosques and madrasas, or with more popular forms of piety through the erection of *zawiyas*, *khanaqahs* (respectively, less and more formal monastic institutions for Sufis), and pilgrimage complexes, was one of the surest ways to attain this.

Each of these dynasties inherited not just styles of building from their predecessors, but a physical landscape that to some extent limited their architectural choices. The primacy of available building materials dictated the choice of stone or brick, which in turn informed the decoration; usually tile with brick or carving on stone, supplemented by some stucco and carved or painted wood. There are many possible ways in which the architectural output of these dynasties can be studied. I will concentrate on two themes, the first secular, focusing on palatial and other domestic architecture, the second religious, focusing first on mosques and then on other religious ensembles.

## Secular Architecture

### *The Mamluks*

We have more information and extant monuments in this category from the Mamluks than any of the other dynasties, so we may start there. The Mamluks were manumitted Turkish slave troops who usurped power from their predecessors, the Kurdish Ayyubids, in the middle of the thirteenth century, and went on to control the core of the Middle East: Egypt, Syria, and the holy cities of Mecca

and Medina in the Hijaz. Having severed all family ties, they would be, at least in theory, fiercely loyal to their masters, but on the death of a sultan a nominal successor would be appointed while amirs jockeyed behind the scenes to see who could muster the most support. There was a fast turnover of Mamluk sultans, but the efficacy of the system is demonstrated by the Mamluks' lengthy tenure of over 250 years, during which time they were the principal power in the Middle East.

Their seat of power in Cairo was also that built by their Ayyubid predecessors, the citadel. Of the actual royal palaces on the Cairo citadel nothing remains, but we do at least have drawings and a plan of the single most impressive Mamluk building there, the Iwan al-Kabir (Great Iwan), a domed ceremonial hall rebuilt by al-Nasir Muhammad in 1333–1334. Its puzzling name for a domed hall arose because it replaced an earlier building on the same site that had an iwan as its main form. The hall was used for sessions of the *dar al-'adl* (court of justice) where the sultan held court on petitions from commoners to redress wrongs, and on separate occasions to distribute land grants to his amirs, and receive foreign ambassadors. It was monumental in scale, with, at just over 16m diameter, the single largest dome in Cairo, supported on massive reused Pharaonic columns. Like the other large domes there, it was made of wood but decorated with green tiles, as was its neighbor, the mosque of the same patron, also refurbished in 1335. The plan of the Iwan al-Kabir is an unusual one for the period, being partly basilical. This has been seen as a deliberate attempt to invoke the early eighth-century throne halls of the Umayyad palaces of Syria, harking back to a golden age of the caliphate in an area also under Mamluk rule (Rabbat 1995: 256–263).

Another Mamluk throne hall was built by Jakam, the Mamluk governor of Aleppo in 1406; it shared with its predecessor in Cairo its monumentality and high visibility, also being built in a prominent place on the citadel, in this case on top of the Ayyubid entrance. In the wake of Timur's invasion of Syria and the Mamluk sultan Faraj's unwillingness to confront him, Jakam made his own bid for the office of sultan (to which the throne hall can be related), although his premature death in battle in 1407 obviated a direct contest. The plan of Jakam's hall in Aleppo was quite different from the Iwan al-Kabir in Cairo, being a nine-bay one. But its span of just over 8m diameter proved too long for the beams he had ordered from Baalbak; only 10 years later under Sultan al-Mu'ayyad was the work finished with beams from the Damascus area (Herzfeld 1955: 94–95).

Although the sultan's residence at the Cairo citadel, the Qasr al-Ablaq (Striped Palace), has disappeared, the fragments that remain of some of the amirs' palaces in Cairo give us crucial information on the scale, form, and decoration of the finest Mamluk domestic architecture. The Palace of Qawsun (1336) has a main entrance portal unmatched in Cairo save for that of the adjacent complex of Sultan Hasan. Its enormous ground floor vaulted storeroom and stables<sup>1</sup> supported an upper floor *qa'a*, a reception hall consisting of two main axial iwans, each provided with deep recesses, and two small cross iwans, with a sunken courtyard, probably covered, between them. The colossal scale of this space is evident

in the distance between the back of the recesses of the iwans on the main axis: just over 40 m. The courtyard itself was 12.5 × 11.1 m. Its wooden roofing, probably also supporting a lantern, must have been an impressive technical achievement – the span is much greater than that of the Aleppo hall which Jakam was unable to finish.<sup>2</sup>

Other surviving fourteenth-century *qa'as* in Cairo show that, even if the scale of Qawsun's palace was exceptional, they were only slightly less monumental. That of Bashtak in the center of the old city has well-preserved ceiling decoration in its main iwan (1337). Like the nearby mausoleum of Qalawun, it displays octagonal wooden coffers painted with similar motifs, and of similar high quality.

Another of al-Nasir Muhammad's amirs, Tankiz, built the Dar al-Dhahab (Golden Palace) in 1328, reputedly at the time the single most valuable property in Damascus, of which he was governor. It has not survived, but some of its stonework, including a unique glass mosaic inlaid fountain, was incorporated in the late Ottoman 'Azm Palace that replaced it on the same site and shows that, whether for fine inlay or carved work, it was the equal of the better known religious buildings that have survived from the Mamluk period (Meinecke 1992: cat. no. 9C/222).

The fifteenth century shows a reduction in the scale of *qa'as*. All now have much smaller vestigial side iwans, and the main iwans, instead of stone arches, have wooden corbels (known as *kurdīs* in the sources) leading to a flat arch. That of Sultan Qaytbay in the Bayt al-Razzaz is the largest, but that of the merchant Muhibb al-Din (c. 1400–1450) preserves the most detail in its extensive decorative program.<sup>3</sup>

Three *maq'ads* (reception halls) from this period have been preserved. The only open one, part of the palace of the amir Mamay (1496), has an elevated balcony fronted by an arcade of five arches that originally overlooked an interior courtyard. It too has a superbly decorated wooden ceiling. Two closed *maq'ads*, in which the open arcade is substituted by windows, were attached to the complexes of the sultans Qaytbay (1474) and al-Ghawri (1504–1505). They point to an otherwise unusual gender segregation in Mamluk architecture, as they were reserved for family members of the founder.

### *The Marinids*

The Marinids were a Berber dynasty of the Zanata group who ruled the western Maghrib (mostly equivalent to modern Morocco) from the mid- thirteenth until the mid- fourteenth centuries. They were the heirs of the Almohads (see Balbale, CHAPTER 14) but were initially not inspired by their religious fervor. However, after the foundation of their capital at Fas Jadid (New Fez) in 1276, they tried to harness the spirit of *jihad* (holy war) for the reconquest of Spain. They were unable to gain a permanent foothold there, although for a while in the mid-fourteenth century they controlled North Africa as far as Ifriqiyya (Tunisia).

The survival rate of Marinid palaces was poor. The principal monuments would have been in Fas al-Jadid, the administrative and royal foundation (by Abu Yusuf, begun 1276) that had its own walls, adjacent to the older town of Fez. The mosque has survived from this ensemble but not the palaces. However, what has survived is a very interesting account of the detailed involvement of the sultan Abu'l-Hasan in the planning of a house in Fez to accommodate his new Tunisian bride. Unable to find a suitable house, he specified that one be built with four domed rooms, each different and adjacent to two other rooms. The cedar wood used was to be carved and painted with floral and polygonal patterns; the ceilings of the abutting rooms were to differ from those of the dome chambers. The courtyard was to include columns and marble basins, and be paved with tile mosaic and marble. The doors, cupboards, and grilles were to be made of marquetry, enhanced with gilded copper or silvered iron.

Some possible fourteenth- and fifteenth-century houses have survived in Fez, which may be simplified versions of the house above. They have rooms around a central rectangular courtyard, with columns supporting a portico on the lower floor and a balcony on the upper. There are large rectangular rooms on the main axes, with smaller rooms or staircases in the corners. The elevation and decoration of the finest showed much in common with contemporary fourteenth-century madrasas in Fez (Marçais 1954: 313–314).

With regard to Abu'l-Hasan's house at Fez, it has been remarked how its plan could be compared to the fourteenth-century Court of the Lions in the celebrated Nasrid palace at the Alhambra of Granada (Marçais 1954: 311; see Robinson, CHAPTER 28). The comparison should not be regarded as too fanciful. The Marinid patrons were as wealthy as their Nasrid contemporaries and had similar tastes; the remaining fragments suggest that their vanished palaces may have been worthy competitors to the Alhambra. Some of the same elements can be seen in the remains of a palace at al-'Ubbad near Tlemcen, down the hill from the mosque and mausoleum of Shaykh Abu Madyan (also by Abu'l-Hasan, 1337), and presumably built as a royal residence for the sultan's pilgrimage visits. Three courtyards of varying size were surrounded mainly by long rectangular rooms; the most spacious had a basin, and a portico fronting it. The quality of its remaining stucco decoration was also comparable to that in the Fez madrasas.

### *The Ilkhanids and Timurids*

The founder of the Ilkhanids was the Mongol Hulagu, grandson of Chinggis Khan. His successors ruled over Iraq, Persia, and Transcaucasia, with the Seljuqs of Anatolia paying tribute to them. After the conversion of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304) to Islam, state patronage of monuments greatly increased. Uljaytu (r. 1304–1316), his successor and brother, moved the capital to his new foundation of Sultaniyya in northwest Iran, but it proved ephemeral (Blair 1986). After the death of the last ruler Abu Sa'id (r. 1316–1335) the empire disintegrated

rapidly into small principalities. Timur (r. 1370–1405) (known as Tamerlane in the West), was Turkish-speaking but raised in a Turko-Mongol milieu. He came to power in Central Asia, from where he expanded to control Iran, leaving his sons in charge of various provinces. He was also undefeated in his campaigns as far apart as Delhi (1398), Damascus (1401), and Ankara (1402), bringing back vast amounts of booty that he used for monuments large enough to match his ego. His successors ruled from Herat, with their domain reduced to Khurasan, Afghanistan, and Transoxiana in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Both the Mongols and Timurids were nomads, heirs to a tradition in which tents were the setting for the most important aspects of royal life, from ceremonies of allegiance, to reception of ambassadors, to celebratory feasts. The *urdu* (imperial encampment) that accompanied the Ilkhanid ruler on his travels was essentially a tented city, with, for instance, separate camps for the ruler and each of his wives. Even though none of these tents have survived, textual sources and manuscript painting provide abundant evidence of their monumentality and sumptuousness. For example, a tent with a thousand gold pegs was made for the Ilkhanid sultan Arghun (r. 1284–1291) (O'Kane 1993: 250).

But the Irano-Islamic traditions that the Ilkhanids and Timurids encountered were oriented toward sedentary monarchs. Abaqa Khan was the Mongol patron of one of the first palace buildings at Takht-i Sulayman (Throne of Solomon, c. 1265–1275), although its remote location, in Azerbaijan, far from any urban center, perhaps made it more attractive to the patron's nomadic heritage. It seems to have had four irregularly spaced iwans around the central lake, partially built on the former Sasanian fire temple and palace at the site. Particularly important were the tiles recovered in and around two octagonal rooms attached to the western iwan: they displayed the first examples seen in Islamic art of Chinese phoenixes and dragons. Also important were luster tiles with verses of the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), relating the exploits of ancient Persian kings such as Kay Khusraw and Alexander the Great, heroes to whom the Ilkhanids wished to be compared. Nearby kilns show that, exceptionally, luster potters were moved from their native Kashan to make tiles on the spot (O'Kane 2011: 179).

Timur's major foray into this genre, his Aq Saray (White Palace, 1379–1396) at Shahr-i Sabz near Samarqand, was probably the largest of its kind, if we can judge by the staggering monumentality of its surviving entrance portal, still one of the most impressive walls of tilework ever built. It led into a courtyard just under 100m wide, and judging by the Castilian ambassador Clavijo's comments, its interior was as impressive as its entrance (Golombek and Wilber 1988: 273–274).

The most common fusion of the nomadic and sedentary was in gardens. Ghazan Khan built a *chahar bagh* (partitioned garden) at Ujan near Tabriz with towers, pavilions, and a bath, at whose center were a golden circular trellis tent with a (much larger) tent of state provided with awnings. This was a precursor to the many Timurid examples, for which Timur himself set the standard, with some half

dozen encircling the outskirts of Samarqand (Golombek 1995). Although some of these included pavilions, the most magnificent receptions areas, such as those seen by Clavijo in a feast hosted by Timur's wife Saray Malik Khanum, were in the tents erected within them (O'Kane 1993: 250). On occasion Timur could also transform a religious ensemble, such as the madrasa of Saray Malik Khanum in Samarqand, into the equivalent of a palace by pitching his tents in its courtyard. An added twist to his patronage is that some of his gardens seem to have been constructed in association with the marriage celebrations held there, and thereafter remained associated with those particular wives (Golombek 1995).

This method of maintaining a nomadic lifestyle in the vicinity of a city was retained by Timur's successors at their new capital Herat. The combination of pavilion and tent within a garden setting is best conveyed by the frontispiece to the Cairo National Library's copy of Sa'di's *Bustan*, illustrated by the celebrated Herati painter Bihzad. It shows Sultan Husayn, the last major Timurid ruler (1470–1506), within a courtyard presiding over a feast with a circular trellis tent with an awning behind him as well as a garden pavilion (O'Kane 1993: fig. 12). However, the inseparability of a pavilion and a formal partitioned garden is confirmed by the *Irshad al-zira'a*, an early sixteenth-century agricultural manual written by one who was formerly in Timurid employ, who takes it for granted that a pavilion, not centered but near one end of the main axial prospect, should be present (Subtelny 1993).

### *The Tughluqs*

The Tughluqs (1320–1414) came to power by defeating a previous usurper. Ghiyath al-Din and his son Muhammad (r. 1325–1351) were successful in defending their kingdom against Mongol Chaghatayid incursions, but Muhammad Shah's military acumen was not matched by leadership abilities. Excessive taxation and the movement of the capital to Dawlatabad (1323–1327) in the Deccan region of south India proved extremely unpopular. Timur's invasion in 1398 fatally weakened the sultanate, and various independent dynasties were established in the provinces.

The Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta, who served nearly nine years as a *qadi* (judge) in Delhi for the ruler Muhammad ibn Tughluq, provides an invaluable detailed account. The paucity of Tughluq palace architecture may be explained by his remark that when a sultan died his palace was abandoned and a new one built. This was taken to extremes by the three main Tughluqid rulers, who built three successive capitals around Delhi at Tughluqabad, Jahanpanah, and Firuzabad. Still, enough remains of the plan of the palace in the citadel at Tughluqabad of Muhammad ibn Tughluq's predecessor and the founder of the dynasty, Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq, to show that it was largely composed of two adjacent peristyle courtyards, the innermost with a four-iwan plan (Shokoohy and Shokoohy 1994: fig. 8).



The main audience hall of Sultan Muhammad at Jahanpanah, the Hizar Sutun (Hall of Thousand Columns) was composed of painted wooden columns and a carved wooden roof. Like the Tughluqabad palace, it was reached after passing through several gates. The name conjures up a hypostyle palace, but, although not mentioned by Ibn Battuta, it must also, like the Tughluqabad palace, have been fronted by a courtyard, since the ceremonies he mentioned involved the participation of over 100 horses and elephants, together with many more soldiers. Sultan Muhammad, and presumably the other Tughluqid rulers, had also not quite left behind the nomadic habits of their predecessors, for Ibn Battuta also mentions a number of special occasions on which state tents were erected within the palace complex (Ibn Battuta 1958–1971: vol. 3, 667).

The frequency of wooden pavilions can also be adduced from the circumstances surrounding the death of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq. He had asked his son Muhammad to build a riverside wooden pavilion (*kushk*), but he was fatally crushed when it collapsed (according to Ibn Battuta by design) during an elephant parade.

## Mosques and Other Religious Architecture

### *The Marinids*

The foundation of Fas al-Jadid or New Fez (1276) was accompanied by the building of a congregational mosque there. Like many previous Maghribi mosques, it has a T-plan with a dome over the ante-mihrab bay, although its relatively small size (54 × 34m) is reflected in the single bays that surround three sides of the rectangular courtyard. The much larger mosques in the adjacent older town obviated the need for a new building of any great size, and this applied to most of the towns that the Marinids occupied, with the exception of Mansura, their new foundation, built while they were besieging Tlemcen.

The Mansura mosque has a foundation inscription on its portal mentioning Sultan Abu Ya'qub as the founder (1303); although it was worked on by Sultan Abu'l-Hasan when the Marinids retook Tlemcen (1336), it remained unfinished (Bouroubia 1973: 159–170). The plan has been uncovered by excavation and is exceptional in many ways. Unlike most earlier Maghribi monuments it has a projecting entrance portal, surmounted in this case by the minaret. The courtyard is square rather than rectangular, and while it has a T-plan, the dome that in other mosques takes up the ante-mihrab bay is here replaced by a space 14m square, covered by either a dome or, more likely, a pyramidal roof, that takes up nine bays in front of the mihrab. This element, as we shall see, is surprisingly close to the plan of the mosque built by the Mamluk sultan Baybars at Cairo (1267–1269). Three sides of the monumental 38m high minaret survive, and give some idea of the fine tile and carved decoration that might have graced other parts of the building.



Closer to Tlemcen, in the suburb of al-'Ubbad, is the mosque of Abu Madyan (1339), part of the shrine complex built by Sultan Abu'l-Hasan. This shares with Mansura the emphasis on a *pishtaq* (elevated portal), embellished on the outside with some of the finest tile mosaic in the Maghrib, and an impressive carved wooden cornice. It leads to a vestibule decorated with stucco panels on the walls and a *muqarnas* vault whose delicacy and complexity is matched only by those of the Alhambra. Unusually, from the vestibule a staircase leads down to the ablutions area, and up to a Qur'an school, another feature that suggests the influence of Mamluk Egypt. The mosque could be considered a simplified version of that of Fas al-Jadid, but it has some unusual features in its decoration, notably a grilled dome over the ante-mihrab bay that, instead of the more common ribs, has a naturalistic design of flowering shrubs, and in the arcades on the qibla side, barrel vaults decorated with plaster coffers that imitate the similar designs in wooden *artesonado* (coffered wooden) ceilings (Bouroubia 1973: 159–170).

The fame of Marinid architecture rests principally on the cluster of madrasas they erected, mostly at Fez, during 80 years of dynastic rule. After Abu 'Inan's madrasas at Meknes (1350) and Fez (1350–1355), however, no Marinid building of importance was constructed. But by this time the madrasas may have fulfilled their primary purpose, which was to educate a group of Berber-speaking jurists loyal to the Marinid rulers and who would be able to challenge the former, principally Arabic-speaking members of the ulama (Shatzmiller 2000: 87–93). At this time the most prestigious location in which teaching was held would still have been the Qayrawiyyin Mosque in Fez (tenth century and later), so these madrasas had much to prove. The founder of the dynasty, Abu Yusuf Ya'qub, built the first, the Saffarin madrasa in Fez (1271). It lacks the intricate decoration of its successors but contains many of the same ingredients: small scale, no exterior façade, a basin within the courtyard, a prayer hall that is large relative to the other spaces, student cells,<sup>4</sup> and a minaret. It is the jewel-like courtyards of its successors such as the Sahrij (1321, Figure 23.1) and 'Attarin (1346), however, that typify the genre. Columns and dadoes are clad in tile mosaic and sgraffiato epigraphic tiles. Densely packed stucco fills the walls above, broken only by the equally complex carving of the wooden lintels and, crowning one's vision, intricate carved wooden cornices. The courtyard is normally surrounded by a corridor that leads to the student cells, but privacy is maintained by a wooden screen that has the further effect of limiting the space of the courtyard. What redeems these spaces from visual surfeit is indeed their restricted space, since the viewer can never be so far away that the details are imperceptible.

The situation is different in the largest of the Marinid madrasas, the Bu 'Inaniyya (1350–1355). Ibn Battuta, asserting its superiority to madrasas elsewhere in the Islamic world claimed that “this madrasa has no rival in size, elevation, or the decorative plasterwork in it” (Ibn Battuta 1958–1971: vol. 2, 53; vol. 3, 584). He was of course mistaken in terms of its size and elevation, but it is precisely this combination of larger size and equally involved stucco that, despite the lack of a



FIGURE 23.1 Courtyard, Sahrij madrasa, Fez. Source: Bernard O’Kane. Reproduced with permission.

tiled floor, still results in details that blur when seen from the other side of the courtyard. In terms of plan, however, the Bu 'Inaniyya was exceptional in its accommodation of a two-aisled prayer hall provided with a minbar, which presents a façade of five open arches to the courtyard. This is a reflection of its dual character, for its foundation inscription mentioned that it was also designed as a venue for the obligatory Friday prayer. The prayer hall would normally have been used for teaching in these madrasas, but here it is made more accessible by an adjacent rear entrance. Perhaps because of this there is another innovation: two square chambers with wooden domes on the cross axis of the courtyard, just where one would expect to find an iwan in madrasas further east in the Islamic world. There are also many links between madrasas and residences, and in addition to the small scale of the Moroccan examples, these dome chambers provide a parallel with a larger scale residence, the roughly contemporary Court of the Lions of the Alhambra Palace in Granada (see Robinson, CHAPTER 28). The exterior of this madrasa is also more interesting than usual. The entrance is marked by two arches that form a bay in front of the entrance; each of the four sides is decorated with stucco. And adjacent on the opposite side of the street was a unique water clock with bowls supported on finely carved wooden brackets. One final feature should be mentioned, its bronze-revetted main entrance door. This, also seen on some earlier Almoravid monuments (see Balbale, CHAPTER 14), is typical of many of Marinid madrasas, forming a corpus surpassed only by those of Mamluk Cairo.

### *The Mamluks*

The major cities of Egypt and Syria had long had Friday mosques when the Mamluks came to power, so the scope for building new ones was limited. Cairo was the city where the sultans ruled from and on which they concentrated their patronage. Although the position of the Shafi'i law school (one of the four great law schools of Sunni Islam) on the building of Friday mosques was that there should be only one in each urban entity, the Hanafi school had no such restriction. This has a bearing on the first major Mamluk mosque, that of Baybars (r. 1260–1277). The Hanafi Mamluk amirs had previously had disputes with the Shafi'i judges; in response Baybars abolished their judicial monopoly and made the four schools of law virtually equal.

Baybars needed a large clear site, and picked al-Husayniyya, north of the old Fatimid walled city, in close proximity to the *zawiya* of Shaykh Khidr (his spiritual adviser) which Baybars had previously erected for him. In 1266 Khidr advised Baybars not to travel to Kerak; Baybars set out but fell from his horse and injured his thigh. Shortly after his recovery two months later, he ordered the construction of the mosque. Since Ibn Shaddad, a contemporary historian, mentions that the sultan named the mosque al-ʿAfiya (Good Health), there was possibly a connection between these events. Baybars also ordered that the mosque should have a portal like that of his madrasa and a dome like that of the tomb of the famous

jurist Imam al-Shafi'i (1211) erected over the mihrab. The wooden dome is no longer extant, but it was clearly built in competition with the almost equally large dome of the Ayyubid tomb of Imam al-Shafi'i, as shown by Baybars's appointment of a *khatib* (preacher) belonging to the rival Hanafi law school to his mosque, completed in 1269. In addition, when Jaffa was captured from the Crusaders in the following year, Baybars supervised the demolition of its citadel, and specified that its wood should be used for the *maqsura* (royal enclosure) of his mosque and its marble for the mihrab (Behrens-Abouseif 2007: 121–126).

The mosque has a hypostyle plan, in which the dome in front of the mihrab takes up the space of nine bays and constitutes the *maqsura*. This harks back to the Seljuq sultan Malikshah's insertion of a dome into the hypostyle prayer hall of the Isfahan Friday mosque in the late eleventh century; several Anatolian mosques had used variations on this plan in the meantime. The mosque of Baybars had three projecting portals, but the resemblance to the portal of his earlier madrasa in Cairo lay in the placing of a minaret above the gate; recently it has been shown that all three portals probably had minarets (Behrens-Abouseif 2007: 124).

This remained the largest of Mamluk congregational mosques. Under al-Nasir Muhammad, however, when the Mamluk economy was at its greatest and the population of the city was expanding, the sultan and his chief amirs considerably increased the number of mosques. Al-Nasir Muhammad himself built two, one in the citadel (1318, rebuilt 1335) and another, the Jami' al-Jadid (New Congregational Mosque, 1312), on the Nile shore north between Fustat and the Fatimid city. The latter has not survived, but from its detailed description by the historian Ibn Duqmaq it seems to have been very similar to the citadel mosque. Both, like Baybars's mosque, had a domed *maqsura* taking up the space of nine bays in the hypostyle plan, and the Jami' al-Jadid may also have had three projecting entrance portals like Baybars's mosque. The Jami' al-Jadid also had a *maqsura* on its northern side for Sufis. This was presumably just a grilled enclosure, but it presages the building of complexes which would blur the distinctions between *khanqah*, madrasa, and mosque in Mamluk society. The most notable complex is that of Sultan Hasan (1356–1363), designated a congregational mosque (*jami'*) in its *waqfiyya* (endowment deed), although the space was also used by students of its madrasa. And in the fifteenth century such was the flexibility of these terms that on occasion the endowment deed and foundation inscription are at odds with the appropriate term, it being called madrasa in one and mosque in the other. Given this interchangeability, discussion of religious complexes is now in order.

There are several interrelated aspects of Mamluk patronage of complexes that should be considered. The prime consideration was undoubtedly piety, which is related to the concept of *baraka* (grace or blessing). This in turn led to other considerations: principally the building of mausoleums, but also to their inclusion within complexes and their siting in relation to the street and the qibla area. Building a mausoleum was still to some extent a controversial matter, but religious objections would clearly be less likely if the tomb chamber was attached to



a larger building that had a specific religious function such as a mosque, madrasa, or *khanaqah*. Secondly, closely related to the building of complexes was the *waqf ahli*, the family endowment, whereby family members controlled the disbursement of *waqf* income, and were permitted to keep any surplus to the needs of maintaining the religious institution. For an official whose tenure of power was precarious and whose wealth could be confiscated if he fell into disgrace, this had the added advantage of securing most of his wealth for his family, since *waqfs*, at least in theory, were inalienable.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly is the question of street–qibla alignment in the most prestigious location for monuments, the densely settled old city and neighboring quarters, which in turn is related to *baraka* and the siting of the mausoleum within complexes. Fourthly is the popularity of Sufism, which was reflected in the composition of complexes from the early fourteenth century onwards. We will explore how these concepts intersect in some of the most important examples erected in Cairo.

Sultan Qalawun's complex (1283–1284) consisted of the combination of madrasa, hospital, and mausoleum (Figure 23.2). While fighting against the Crusaders in Syria he had been injured and was subsequently treated at the hospital complex of Nur al-Din in Damascus (1154), also comprising the founder's madrasa and mausoleum. On his recovery he vowed to build a hospital in Cairo. The site was a central one of great prestige: that of the former western Fatimid palace in the center of the Fatimid city, on the west of Bayn al-Qasrayn (the square between the two palaces).

Qalawun's complex has the mausoleum and madrasa adjacent to the street, but no part of the hospital façade abutted it. The site of the hospital may have been in part decided by the availability of at least part of a courtyard from the old Fatimid palace, since the northern iwan of the hospital has a T-plan whose closest parallels are with Fatimid housing in Fustat. But siting the mausoleum on the street was always a priority, since passersby were thereby more likely to offer prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased. The *waqfiyya* ensured that the street outside reverberated with the chant of the Qur'an, since teams of Qur'an readers were employed to sit in the window niches for the benefit of those passing. The provision of a mihrab within the mausoleum, normal in earlier mausoleums in Egypt, would also have encouraged prayer for the occupant of the tomb, as would the six muezzins who gave the call to prayer from the adjacent minaret (despite it not being a building in which a *khutba* (sermon) for the Friday prayer could be given). The site of the minaret too was carefully chosen to ensure maximum visibility for those coming down the *qasaba*, the main artery of the old city of Cairo, from the north.

The building is also noticeable for its references to the plan and decoration of Umayyad predecessors. This is evident in the basilical plan of the qibla iwan of the madrasa, in the octagon made up of four piers and four columns supporting the mausoleum dome, all set within a square, a simplification of the plan of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and in its decoration with a variation of the *karma*, the vine scroll that was originally so significant in the interior of the

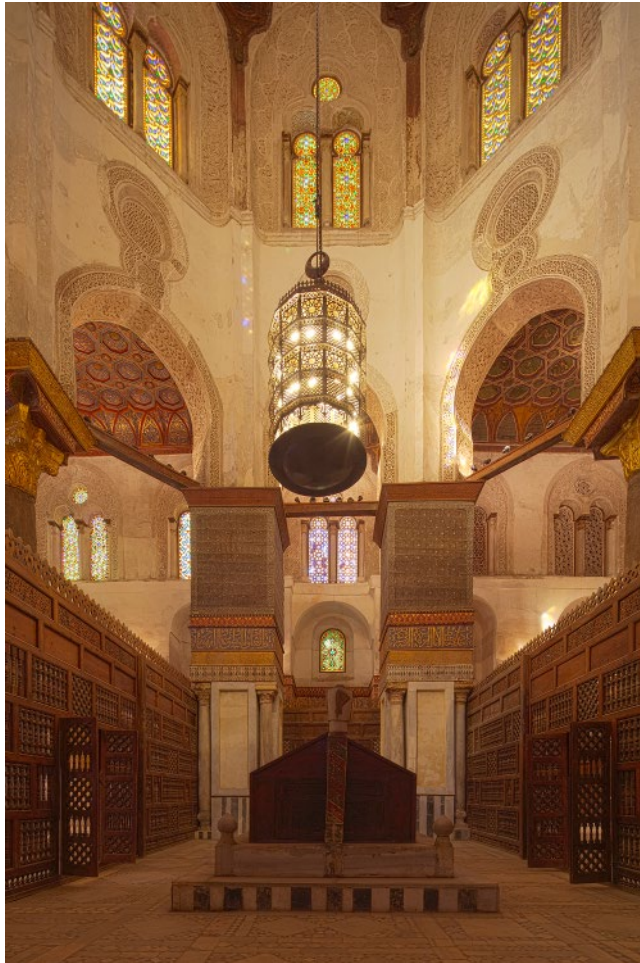


FIGURE 23.2 Interior of mausoleum, complex of Qalawun, Cairo. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.

prayer hall of the Great Mosque of Damascus (Flood 1997). Qalawun had spent a significant amount of time fighting the Crusaders in Syria and was presumably aware of the powerful messages of splendor and success that his models conveyed. This splendor was increased by the use of intricate polychrome inlay of stone and precious materials in the mihrab of the mausoleum, combining tiers of dwarf columns and variegated joggled voussoirs, a reworking of Ayyubid Syrian models that was to be copied in turn for decades in Cairene examples.

Although the street façade of the building was very narrow relative to its depth, its articulation was designed to bring maximum visual impact. For the first time it was provided with a regular series of deeply recessed niches framing triple-tiered windows, the highest consisting of novel double round-headed niches topped

by a bull's-eye. Running the length of the façade between the first and second tiers is a large foundation inscription band that devotes the bulk of its content to the founder's titles; polychromy would have made its impact even greater.

Baybars al-Jashinkir's complex (1307–1310), consisting of a mausoleum and a *khanaqah*, was the first Mamluk one to make Sufis its prime focus. It is sited on a plot with a very limited street façade. The patron had the choice of placing his mausoleum far away from the street, beside the qibla iwan of the *khanaqah* to receive prayer from the Sufis, or far away from the qibla iwan, but on the street where passersby would be more likely to notice it (especially as it projected forcefully into the street); clearly street trumped qibla here. The two structures are also contrasted in terms of decoration, with the mausoleum receiving the finest marble inlay and painted ceilings (in its vestibule) of the time. Presumably it was thought that elaborate decoration would be a distraction for the austere Sufis, as even the mihrab of the *khanaqah*, the area usually reserved for splendor, is plain.

Although not a ruler of any great political or military distinction, Sultan Hasan has the honor of being responsible for the single most impressive Mamluk complex mentioned above (Kahil 2008; Figure 23.3). In one sense he was lucky to rule when the Black Death ravished Egypt, since so many complete families died that their inheritance passed to the state, swelling the amount available for building.



FIGURE 23.3 Exterior, complex of Sultan Hasan, Cairo. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.



Its location was carefully selected to display its huge bulk dominating one side of the square beneath the citadel. So solid were its foundations that on occasions rebellious Mamluks were able to drag cannons up to its roof and fire towards the citadel. The return fire barely caused pockmarks in the masonry, but subsequent sultans ordered the staircases of the building destroyed to prevent any further similar attacks.

The complex consists of the aforementioned four-iwan congregational mosque, with four madrasas, one for each Sunni school of law, in its corners, a domed mausoleum (but which was also designated a *masjid* or mosque in the *waqfiyya*) jutting out into the square, and a vestibule preceded by a massive portal that was subtly tilted to make it visible from the citadel. A doctor and 10 medical students were also mentioned in the endowment deed as occupying an upper floor behind the entrance vestibule, an area now ruined (and which may never have been completed) (Kahil 2008: 35–36).

The portal is the largest in Cairo. Its unfinished state (the patron was assassinated before the complex was completed) shows how the stone carving was at first lightly etched on the wall as guidelines for more skilled masons to finish later. It was originally provided with the largest of Cairo's metalwork-revetted doors (later transferred by Sultan Mu'ayyad to his own complex), surpassed in craftsmanship only by the door in the same complex leading from the qibla iwan to the funerary dome chamber behind it.

Behind the street portal is the largest vestibule in Cairo, a dome chamber that surpasses in height and decoration many of the finest mausoleums in the city. Its octagonal lantern compensates for the lack of windows, and spreads light evenly on its three *mugarnas*-filled recesses. The mostly dark passageway from here to the courtyard brings the viewer opposite the largest iwan in Cairo and makes it all the more impressive. Mamluk chronicles reported that the patron asked that it be made higher than the Taq-i Kisra, the still-extant fabled iwan of the pre-Islamic Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon in Iraq, and that this was duly accomplished. In fact, it is smaller, but the assumption of superiority kept everyone satisfied.

One of the most striking features of the qibla iwan functioning as a congregational mosque is the large stucco inscription band that encircles it; the style is so-called Eastern Kufic, more common in contemporary Qur'anic manuscripts. The supervisor of works, the amir Muhammad ibn Bilik al-Muhsini, is known to have penned a Qur'an as well as at least one of the inscriptions within the complex, and it is quite possible that he himself designed many of its motifs, which have much in common with the illumination of contemporary Qur'anic manuscripts.

The ablutions fountain in the center has a bulbous wooden dome; this was probably also the shape and material of the mausoleum dome, later replaced in masonry. The projection of the tomb chamber on three sides of the adjacent square gave it unprecedented prominence, one that was further emphasized by the provision in the *waqfiyya* for 24 groups of five Qur'an reciters to remind passersby to pray for the occupant of the tomb and to admire his beneficence.

The complex of Faraj ibn Barquq (1400–1411), by contrast, was built in an isolated area in the desert – indeed the name in contemporary chronicles for the location is just that, the *sahara*, desert, the area now known as the Northern Cemetery. The architect was thus unencumbered by the variations in street and qibla found within the old city. Its main components are a *khanaqah* and two mausoleums, together with ancillary rooms near the entrance, including two water dispensaries (*sabils*) combined with a *maktab* (Qur'an school) above, and small apartments for the founder's family. We also see here, as with the earlier *khanaqah* of Baybars, a dichotomy in the treatment of the mausoleums and the *khanaqah*: the asceticism of the Sufis apparently called for a lack of possibly distracting luxurious decoration, unstintingly applied to the mausoleums. Here, since this was a newly settled area, positioning the mausoleums beside a street for passersby was not an issue, so proximity to the main prayer area, the qibla prayer hall, was chosen instead. The mausoleums themselves have the largest stone domes in Cairo, with a diameter of 14.3 m and height of 30.4 m. Instead of the usual ribbing they display a more developed form of ornamentation with a zigzag pattern, above an undulating zone of transition.

By the time al-Ashraf Barsbay built his complex in the Northern Cemetery (1432) the urban context had changed; the area outside the main façade had become a well-traveled street leading towards the citadel. This meant that the siting of the mausoleum within the complex had to take into account this traffic of passersby. But the architect (or the patron) wanted the best of both worlds, that is, to also have it adjacent to the main prayer space. In the *wagfiyya* this prayer hall is designated as both a madrasa and as a *masjid* for the people of the neighborhood to gather and hear the *khutba* on Fridays. But a regular plan of four iwans would have given this a much greater depth than that of the mausoleum, so a two-ivan plan was employed instead. Although described as iwans in the *wagfiyya*, they are in fact each simply wide rectangles fronted by an arcade of three arches; in between them is a *durqa'a*, a courtyard here modified into a strip, that also acts as a passageway to the mausoleum, emphasizing its continuity with the prayer hall.

Adjacent to this madrasa/mausoleum unit was the *khanaqah* itself, whose major element was 10 residential duplexes, as well as seven other cells for the Sufis, together with the usual service functions such as kitchen, stable, cisterns, and a large burial courtyard (*hawsh*).

The importance of the street was recognized not only in the placement of the mausoleum but now, for the first time, by splitting the complex into units separated from the main one. Across the street was a *zawiya* (no longer extant) for poor Muslims, and a dome chamber for the Rifa'iyya Sufi order, indicative of the patron's desire to curry favor with both the official Sufis (at the *khanaqah*) and the more popular Rifa'iyyas.

At the complex of Qaytbay (1472–1474), also in the Northern Cemetery, the earlier focus of Mamluk architecture on monumentality has given way to smaller

scale buildings with a concentration on decoration. The living unit (*rab'*) for the students is not completely separate from the main building, which consists of a *sabil-maktab*, a madrasa, and a mausoleum with an adjoining funerary courtyard. The profile of the building on the exterior has the dome perfectly balanced with the minaret over the portal. The dome itself is the cynosure of carved stone domes in Cairo, with a unique combination of geometric and arabesque ornamentation carved on many levels.

### *The Ilkhanids and Timurids*

Pre-Ilkhanid Iran was notable for the variety of its mosque plans, and this wide range continued in the Ilkhanid period. As in other areas, the larger cities were already provided with major mosques, so not many Ilkhanid congregational mosques were built; however, one stands out for its monumentality: that of the vizier 'Alishah in Tabriz (c. 1318–1322). It was actually part of a complex consisting of a mosque, a mausoleum, a surrounding bazaar, a madrasa, a *khanaqah*, and two baths, but given the fame of the only surviving element, which was part of the mosque, we will discuss it here. The walls were part of the qibla iwan, but their scale may be judged from the name by which it was later known, the *arg* (citadel). Indeed the qibla iwan was later used as a citadel, as the pockmarks caused by cannonballs on its façade show. Its size resulted from a deliberate order on 'Alishah's part to make it 10 cubits wider and higher than the Sasanian Taq-i Kisra, with which Sultan Hasan's later funerary mosque complex in Cairo is also said to have competed, as we have seen above. But the attempt backfired when the iwan in Tabriz fell not long after its construction. The Ilkhanid historian Mustawfi attributed its collapse to its having been built in too much haste, but a seventeenth-century drawing appears to show part of a semi dome on the qibla end; perhaps an experiment with transverse vaulting leading to this semi-dome led to its instability. Adding to the importance of the complex of 'Alishah is the influence that it and its architect had on the development of Mamluk architecture. For the Mamluk ambassador Aitamish, who visited Tabriz shortly after its completion, was so impressed by the minarets of the building that he brought their builder back to Egypt, where he inaugurated a short-lived fashion for tile decoration (Meinecke 1976).

We are not sure of the rest of the mosque's layout, but it is likely that it had a four-iwan plan. Its most surprising feature was a large pool in the middle of the courtyard, 150 cubits (63m) square, which contained an octagonal pavilion in the center with four lions at the corners from whose mouths water poured into the pool. Four boats provided access to it; the tradition of boating in it was maintained in the time of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (d. 1576), when it may have become part of his palace at Tabriz (Grey 1873: 168).

The Friday mosque of Yazd was begun under the Ilkhanids in 1324 but proceeded slowly; its main iwan was only finished in 1334, and the revetment of the

qibla dome chamber in 1375. But it displays three important innovations. The first is the opening of the back of the iwan to almost its full height so that from the courtyard a full view of the interior of the qibla dome chamber is possible. The second is the incorporation of upper story galleries both in the dome chamber and the iwan leading to it. The purpose of these is still not clear, although it is unlikely that they were meant for women. The third is a trend occurring in other monuments: namely the vastly increased use of tilework on the interior of the dome chamber. This varies from the brick and tile used for geometric patterns on the dome and for sacred names on the zone of transition to the complete tile mosaic on the mihrab spandrels, incorporating a unique epigraphic medallion with the names of 'Ali and Muhammad intertwined. Finally, one should note the cross-axial entrance iwan surmounted by two minarets, with a height and slenderness unmatched by any earlier combination of these elements.

The monumentality that characterizes these Ilkhanid monuments was also characteristic of the monuments built by the Central Asian ruler Timur (r. 1370–1405). It was uppermost in Timur's mind when he ordered the building of his Friday mosque in Samarqand (1398–1405) (Figure 23.4), later known as the



FIGURE 23.4 Exterior of the Mosque of Bibi Khanum, Samarqand. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.

Mosque of Bibi Khanum, Timur's principal wife, on account of the earlier building of her funerary madrasa opposite. Started before Timur's Indian campaign, he was so dissatisfied with its scale on his return that he ordered the two supervisors executed and its height to be increased. Apart from its size it was also innovative in several ways. It had an exterior that was decorated on every side. Normally, in a large city it would be hard to obtain the free space necessary to achieve an unobstructed view of the building from the exterior, but Timur's earlier arrogant treatment of those who had objected to their houses being destroyed to make way for a bazaar shows his total disregard for the norms of Islamic property law in this matter (O'Kane 1987: 89).

The mosque's portal and qibla iwan incorporate minarets whose buttresses descend all the way to the ground. This reflects the design of the now vanished Friday mosque of Sultaniyya in Iran, the aforementioned capital built by the Ilkhanid ruler Uljaytu (r. 1304–1316). The interior has the usual four-iwan plan, but for the first time in Iran dome chambers are found behind the two side iwans, a feature that was copied in the Safavid shah Abbas I's seventeenth-century new Friday mosque at Isfahan. This arrangement is found in the Jahanpanah mosque of Delhi (1343), which Timur had seen in 1398, and which may have inspired its counterpart in Samarqand. Timur's mosque was also unusual for the amount of carved stone used in it; this may be partly due to craftsmen taken back from his Indian campaign; at any rate elephants were used to transport the stone, as shown in a later painting by Bihzad depicting its construction process.

The only other two major Timurid mosques were built by Gawhar Shad, the wife of Timur's son Shahrukh, at Mashhad and Herat. That at Mashhad (1418) borrowed the Yazd Friday mosque's feature of the open qibla iwan. It also adapted the two-story galleries of Yazd by placing them around the courtyard, although since the prayer halls below are of just one story, they are merely façade architecture (O'Kane 1987: cat. no. 2).

As with the Mamluks, family *wagfs* were permissible in the Hanafi school of law followed by Iranian sovereigns in this period, so it is not surprising that the most impressive Ilkhanid and Timurid ensembles were erected by royal patrons, and that, like those of the Mamluks, they were also of a funerary nature.

Most of the greatest Ilkhanid ensembles have either not survived, or just a small fragment of them is extant. Chief among them must have been the suburb of Ghazan Khan (Shanb) built near Tabriz (1295–1304). It was groundbreaking in the variety of functions collected in one place. In addition to a palace and garden for the founder, the monuments mentioned in the *wagfiyya* included his monumental tomb, a congregational mosque, a Hanafi and Shafi'i madrasa, a *khanaqah*, a *dar al-siyada* (a hospice for visiting sayyids, i.e., descendants of the Prophet), an observatory, a hospital, a library, a *bayt al-qanun* (House of Laws, serving as a repository for Ghazan Khan's promulgations), an academy of philosophy, a house for the overseer, a cistern, and a bath. The tomb was 12-sided, with a sign of the

zodiac decorating each side. It was the largest in the Islamic world at that time, with a height of 54.6 m and a diameter of 21 m (O'Kane 1996: 507).

Ghazan's brother Uljaytu made his tomb the centerpiece not just of a complex but an entirely new city, Sultaniyya. Earlier, he had sponsored many additions to the shrine of a ninth-century saint, Bayazid Bistami, including a mausoleum for one of Uljaytu's sons (Wilber 1955: cat. no. 28). Not all historians give the same list of components of Uljaytu's complex, but it seems to have included a mosque, madrasa, and *khanaqah*, as well as a *dar al-siyada*. The remaining octagonal tomb (1310–1320) is what gives the building its fame; at a height of 50 m and diameter of 25 m it clearly rivaled Ghazan's in monumentality (Figure 23.5). Original features included the eight partially preserved minarets that encircle the dome, and below them, a stucco enriched gallery, much bigger than its possible model at the tomb of Sultan Sanjar (d. 1157, the last major Seljuq ruler) in Merv, eastern Iran, and a key landmark en route to later mausoleums such as the Taj Mahal in Agra. Its interior decoration was remodeled from tile to painted plaster after its dedication in 1313. The most plausible explanation for this momentous change is that the selection of Qur'anic inscriptions was designed to reflect Uljaytu's ambitions, supported by a contemporary military campaign, to be the protector of the holy shrines at Mecca and Medina (Blair 1987).

Another vanished complex was the Rashidiyya, a suburb of Tabriz, built by Uljaytu's vizier Rashid al-Din (c. 1300–1318). The survival of its *waqfiyya* permits an accurate reconstruction. It included a hospice, a *khanaqah*, a hospital, and a tomb complex arranged around a four-iwan courtyard with summer and winter mosques and a room in which Rashid al-Din's works were to be copied for distribution within Ilkhanid territory (Blair 1984).

Many Timurid complexes also incorporated a mausoleum. Timur again showed his penchant for the grandiose in the shrine he built at the tomb of Shaykh Ahmad Yasavi at Yasa (now Turkistan city in Kazakhstan, 1397–1399). He replaced its original twelfth-century mausoleum with an impressive double-shell domed structure, and adjoined it with an even bigger dome for the centerpiece of the shrine, a meeting hall (*jama'at khana*) for Sufis. The massive entrance iwan was never finished, but all the other sides of the buildings were completely faced with *banna'i* tilework.

Timur was himself ultimately buried in the Gur-i Mir in Samarqand (1404), the tomb that he himself had erected for his grandson Muhammad Sultan, beside the latter's madrasa and *khanaqah*. As with his Friday mosque in Samarqand, it was reputed that he expressed dissatisfaction with its size and ordered it to be built higher. It is unlikely that the whole building was pulled down and re-erected in 10 days, as Clavijo reported, but it is possible that the drum was made higher to compensate, explaining its rather ungainly proportions.

A novel funerary structure is the shrine of 'Abdallah Ansari at Gazur Gah, just outside of Herat, built by Timur's son Shahrukh (1428) (O'Kane 1987: cat. no. 9). Where a grave already existed, the Timurids were inclined to leave it uncovered in



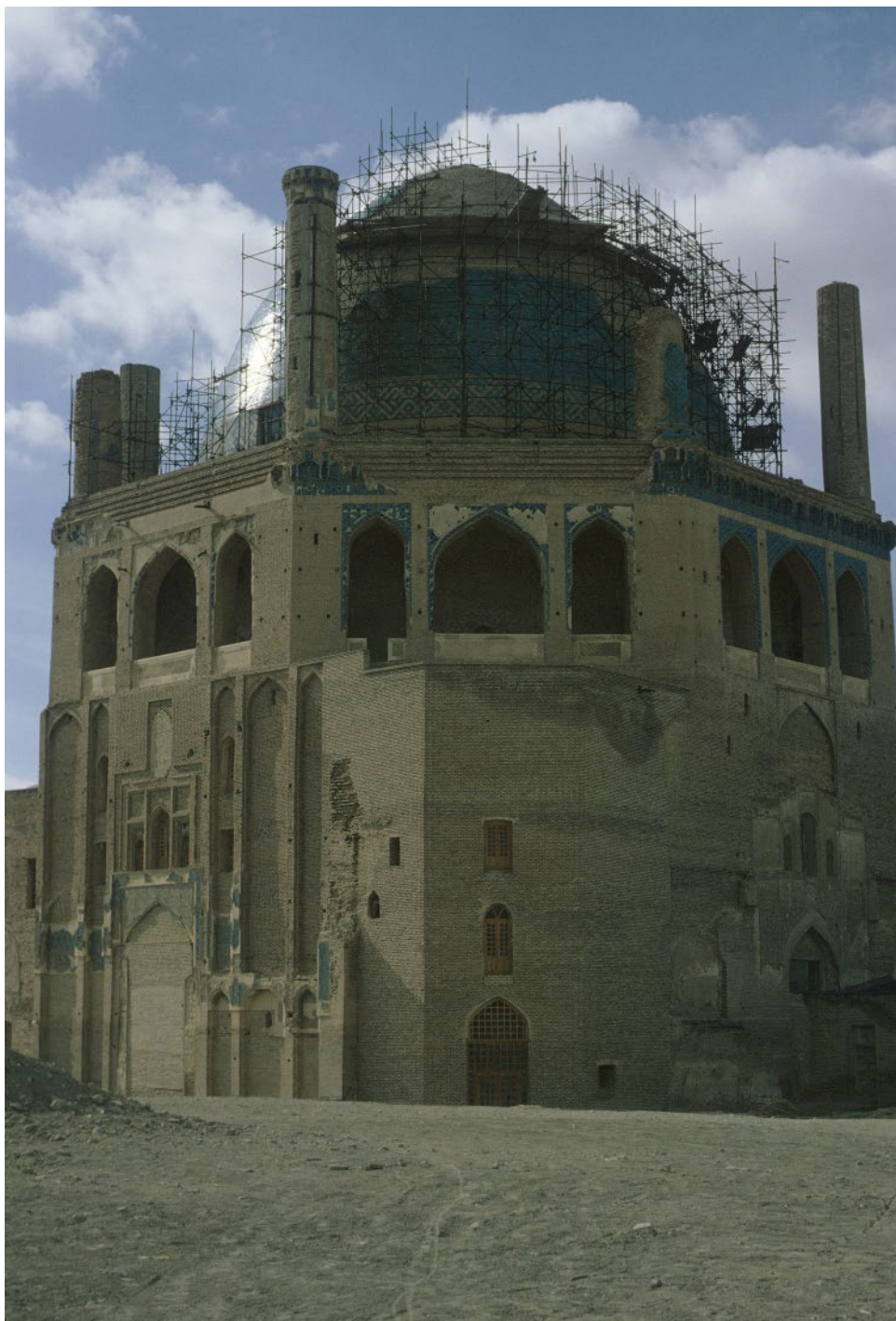


FIGURE 23.5 Exterior of mausoleum of Uljaytu, Sultaniyya, Iran. Source: Marcus Milwright. Reproduced with permission.



a building commemorating its occupant. The shrine at first appears similar to contemporary madrasas, with an entrance complex leading to a courtyard surrounded by cells, but the eastern side of the courtyard, in which the grave is located, has a curtain wall instead, intended to solemnify the surroundings of 'Abdallah Ansari's resting place.

This building, like Gauhar Shad's complexes at Mashhad and Herat, was built by Qavam al-Din Shirazi, the sole Timurid court architect to be mentioned in contemporary histories. The complex at Herat consisted of the mosque, mentioned above, and a funerary madrasa, now the only surviving element (apart from a minaret) (O'Kane 1987: cat. no. 14). It is notable for its innovative vaulting, consisting of intersecting vaults producing a smaller square that is in turn roofed by a shallow dome on *mugarnas* squinches. An even more impressive example of this scheme was used by Qavam al-Din in the madrasa at Khargird (1444) (founded by the vizier Pir Ahmad Khafi), where it is topped by a lantern (Figure 23.6). The accompanying axial recesses in these rooms lend further ambiguities to their spatial quality, the whole leading to a blending of the older tripartite division of cube, zone of transition, and dome (O'Kane 1987: cat. no. 22).

### *The Tughluqs*

Early mosques of the Tughluqs did not lack for scale: that (now ruined) of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq at his eponymous city was 110m each side; the Begampur Mosque (1343) of his successor Sultan Muhammad at Jahanpanah is 90 × 94m. The Begampur Mosque is largely intact. Its plan has been often described as the first four-iwan one in India, but this is inaccurate. There are indeed iwans on the main axis, in conjunction with a dome chamber, but on the side axis the dome chambers stand alone, not preceded by any *pishtaq*. However, this arrangement is still innovative, recalling, surprisingly, that of the Marinid Bu 'Inaniyya madrasa in Fez, discussed above. A characteristically Indian feature is the stone eaves that project from the courtyard arcades. Another innovation is the nine-bay *maqsura* adjoining the northwest corner, provided with its own mihrab, presumably for the royal entourage; an analogous feature appears in the Qutb Mosque, the first Friday mosque of Delhi (1192), and may have its origins in the Ghaznavid and Ghurid mosques of Afghanistan. Like other Tughluq buildings, the mosque features sloping walls, and stucco covered rubble masonry. However, the meager decoration within the qibla dome chamber is a disappointing contrast to the scale of the building, although around the interior of the courtyard the remains of carved stucco ornament are still visible, while the spandrels of the arches on the exterior façade were filled with blue-glazed lotus flowers, one of the earliest occurrences of such tilework in the architecture of the Delhi Sultanate (Welch and Crane 1983).

The Jami' of Firuzshah (c. 1354) at Firuzabad is raised on a plinth, the lower stories presumably being used for rent-producing shops. Like the Begampur



FIGURE 23.6 Interior of lecture hall, madrasa, Khargird. Source: Bernard O’Kane. Reproduced with permission.

mosque it had a staircase leading to a domed entrance pavilion, but the interior is too ruined to be sure of its layout. However, its importance to the founder is shown by the reports that his *Futuhāt*, an apologia for his reign, was carved on a dome chamber supported on eight pillars at the center of the courtyard. This is a sharp contrast to the usual, but surprising, lack of epigraphy on Tughluq architecture. But its text exemplified another interesting trend in Sultanate India, the adoption of Persian for important inscriptions, especially foundation texts, before this became normal in other parts of the Persian-speaking world (O’Kane 2009). Adjacent to the mosque is its minaret, the so-called Lat Pyramid, almost a step well in reverse in that the lower part of its core is solid. However, contemporary sources refer to it as the *minar* of the mosque, and to the reused third-century BCE Ashokan pillar that crowns it as the *minar-i zarrin*, the gilded minaret. Firuzshah clearly had in mind as its prototype the fifth-century Iron Pillar reused in the Qutb Mosque of Delhi, and the contemporary history the *Sirat-i Firuzshahi* celebrates this reuse of a Hindu monument in an Islamic setting, made all the more meritorious through the difficulties of transporting it from its place of origin nearly 200 km away (Flood 2003).

The Khirki Mosque at Jahanpanah is now thought to date from the early part of Firuzshah’s reign, probably before Firuzabad was begun. It is also raised on a plinth, and shares the same squat square stone pillars for the hypostyle area as the Begampur Mosque. The plan is totally different, however, taking symmetry to the ultimate level. The core is the nine-bay plan, itself one of absolute symmetry. This is set within a five by five grid, producing 25 units, of which four are opened for courtyards. The three axial projecting domed entrances are also mirrored by the projecting mihrab dome. It looks great on paper, but in practice the gloom that envelops the main axis from the entrance to the mihrab betrays the poverty of invention, one again exacerbated by the lack of decoration.

Of much greater aesthetic appeal is the Adina Mosque (1374) at Pandua in Bengal, built by Sultan Sikandar Shah of the rival Ilyas dynasty. It is even bigger than any of the Tughluq examples, being 154 × 87 m. The plan is hypostyle, with a monumental iwan inserted on the qibla side. Like the Begampur Mosque, it has a nine-bay annex, although in this case it leads into the *zenana*, a mezzanine floor for the founder’s family inserted into part of the qibla prayer hall. The great appeal of the building lies in the quality of its decoration: the carved stucco, brick, and stone show remarkable variety and invention. The tympana of the 34 bays along the qibla wall show an outstanding variety of carved brick ornamentation. The mihrab in the qibla iwan combines the lushness of Hindu-derived ornamentation with panels of impeccable classical *thuluth* calligraphy, the latter enriched by a floriated scroll in light relief. Almost more impressive are the three polylobed stone mihrabs in the *zenana*, with the same combination of Hindu-derived plus geometric ornamentation and classical Islamic calligraphy, and in addition, on their tympana, astonishing variations on chinoiserie lotus and peony floral elements, the like of which is seen nowhere else in pre-Mughal India.

As in Ilkhanid Iran, the single most impressive extant monument from the Tughluq period is a mausoleum: that of Shaykh Rukn-i 'Alam at Multan (c. 1335–1340), now in Pakistan (Figure 23.7) (Hillenbrand 1992). Astonishingly for such a magnificent building, we have no information from epigraphy or the sources on who built it or when it was built. The oft-quoted story that Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq built it while he was governor of Dipalpur (240 km northeast of Multan) for himself is not borne out by any contemporary text. When the shaykh died in 1335 he was at first buried in the tomb of his grandfather, and only later transferred to the present mausoleum. The most likely possibilities are that it was completed shortly after his death, and commissioned either by the reigning Sultan Muhammad, or by the members of the wealthy Suhrawardi Sufi order to which the shaykh belonged.

The 30 m high dome is made more imposing by its elevated location in the citadel. The octagonal exterior is emphasized by eight massive buttresses, each capped by a domed finial, in turn echoed in smaller versions on the cornice of the upper gallery. This gallery can be seen as a variation on the earlier external galleries of equally monumental tombs such as those of Sultan Sanjar at Merv and Uljaytu at Sultaniyya, culminating in the seventeenth century at the Taj Mahal. The exterior as a whole is enlivened by bands of terracotta, set off against inventive combinations of brick and tile, the latter encompassing mostly monochrome glazed white, turquoise, and dark blue, but which are also occasionally merged in the relatively new technique of underglaze-painted tiles.

The interior is distinguished by its wooden mihrab, prominently displaying the seal of Solomon on the spandrels, a favorite decorative motif in later Mughal architecture. Its mastery of shallow-relief vegetal ornament is a surprising contrast to the awkwardness of the calligraphy of its framing inscription. The use of tile-work is more restrained on the interior, being chiefly concentrated on the shallow squinches, which also display a unique wooden artichoke-like pendent.

Ghiyath al-Din's tomb at Tughluqabad near Delhi (1325) is much smaller but impresses on account of its materials, one of the first sultanate buildings, after the 'Ala'i Darwaza, the monumental gateway added to the Qutb Mosque of Delhi by Sultan 'Ala al-Din Khilji (r. 1290–1316) to use the combination of red sandstone and marble that was to become a favorite of the Mughals. But even with this use of expensive ashlar masonry, so different from the usual plaster-covered rubble walls of other Tughluq buildings, restraint is the order of the day. The polylobing of the outer arched niches is the only exception; even the interior marble mihrab has just this polylobing and carved engaged columns, the rest is plain. The original setting of the tomb was within an artificial lake, recalling the later tomb of Sher Shah Sur at Sasaram. However, the high walls that surround the mausoleum would have made the distant lakeshore view less effective.

The combination of madrasa (1352) and mausoleum (1388?) is also found at the madrasa founded by Firuzshah at the Hauz Khas in Delhi, although their



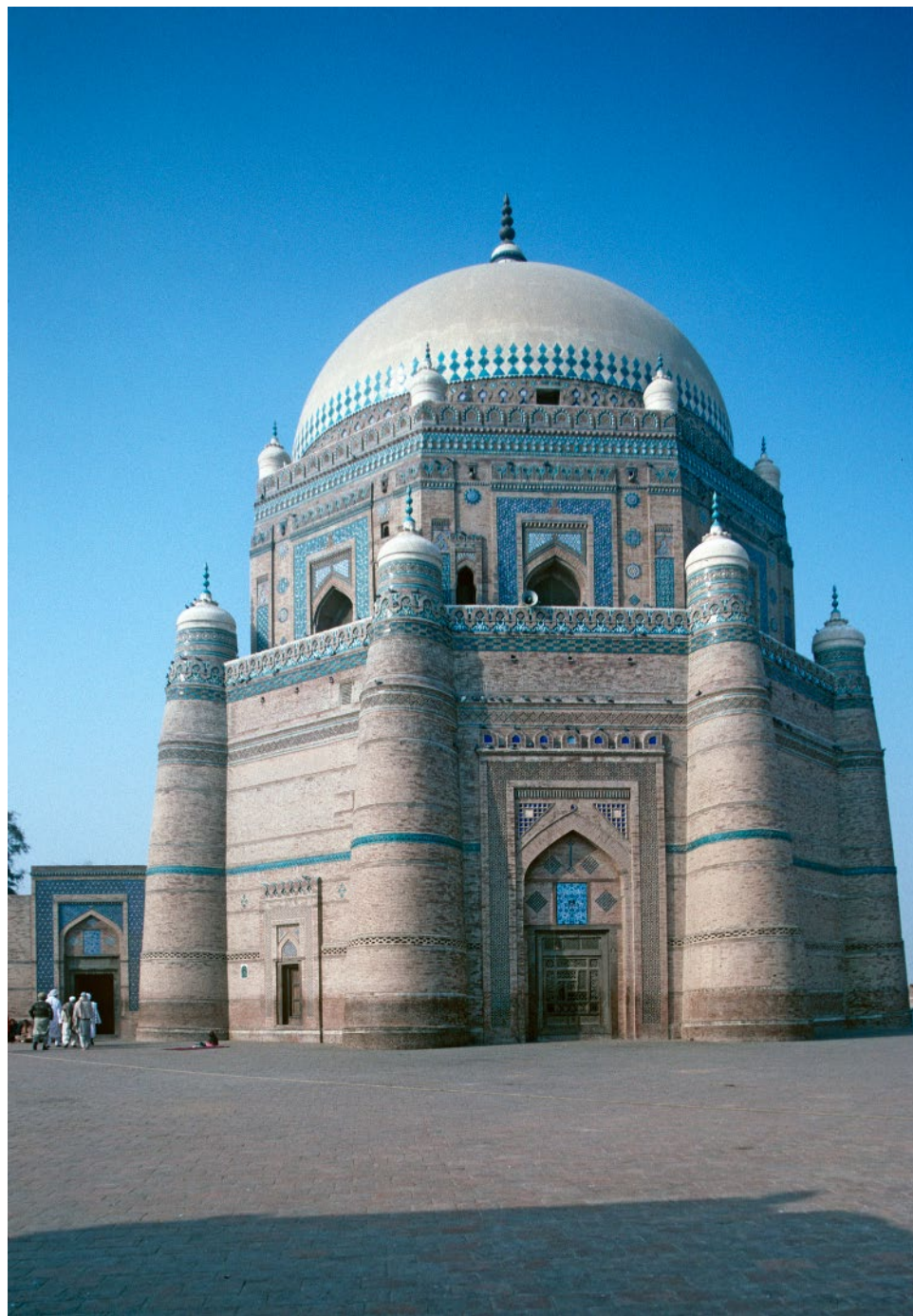


FIGURE 23.7 Exterior of mausoleum of Rukn-i 'Alam, Multan. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.

chronology is not secure – the mausoleum may even have been built by Firuzshah's successor Nasir al-Din Muhammad Shah. The two-story madrasa is an extremely imposing structure, built in two stories in an L shape (the façades are 76 m and 138 m long) at the side of the pool (*hauz*), with arcades punctuated by large and small domes that are further articulated by projecting balconies with wide eaves. The mausoleum is a domed square, made of plaster-covered rubble masonry. The exterior is plain, but elaborate stucco decoration is used for the squinches and dome. It has been suggested that this belongs to the restoration of the tomb by Sikandar Lodi (1507),<sup>6</sup> but the style is in keeping with fourteenth-century work.

## Conclusions

The major dynasties of the fourteenth-century Islamic world inherited vastly different subjects, territories, and cultural traditions, leading naturally to equally forceful differences in the architecture produced under their patronage. But one feature is common to them all: patronage was very much a top-down affair, with the rulers commanding most of the resources and therefore commissioning the most important buildings.

The Marinids controlled the least amount of territory. Whether their own architectural patronage was affected by the over ambitious grandiose architectural projects of their predecessors, the Almoravids (such as the unfinished mosque of Hassan at Rabat) is unclear, but their preferences for jewel-like miniatures is striking, unlike the monumental structures of the other three dynasties. This is reflected in two trends that, not surprisingly, have been noted in contemporary Nasrid work at the Alhambra: interiorization and sensuousness. The confinement of exterior decoration to portals leads to an even greater sense of awe at the finish of the interiors.

Even when the opportunity arose, as at Fas Jadid, to impress their aesthetic upon an urban blank slate, its Friday mosque was smaller than its predecessor in the neighboring old city. This could be categorized as pragmatic restraint, an admirable recognition of the unlikelihood of their new foundation outstripping the older city, but it remains in stark contrast to the other dynasties. Types of Marinid foundations also differ radically from the others, with not a single mausoleum known for a secular ruler. The Maliki school of law's antipathy both to tombs and family endowments was clearly a major social and architectural force here.

In addition, the preponderance of madrasas should be noted. In the three other territories considered in this chapter there were tensions between organized and popular religion, usually between the *khanaqah* and the madrasa; but the lack of Sufi institutions in the Maghrib exposed a conflict instead between the ruling Zanata Berber-speaking jurists and the entrenched Arabic-speaking urban ulama. The madrasas were the rulers' chief weapon in this conflict.

Mamluk patronage is exceptional in many ways. Some of the interrelated concepts that characterize it, such as *baraka*, the building and placing of

mausoleums within complexes, and the *waqf ahli* have been discussed earlier. But we should also notice the concentration of monuments in the dynasty's capital, Cairo. While it is true that sultans occasionally erected important monuments in Jerusalem or Medina (places of pilgrimage rather than the commercially more important urban centers of Aleppo and Damascus), they preferred Cairo for the vast bulk of their projects, leaving patronage in the provinces to the amirs who were appointed as governors there. It is surprising that the Mamluk aesthetic progressed from the monumental to a concentration on ornamentation. In the fifteenth century one way in which this was manifested was in a series of carved stone domes that are unique in the Islamic world.

The nomadic background of the Mongol Ilkhanids and Timurids ensured that their taste for palaces was oriented towards tents. But from the point of Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam onwards they invested in the conventional range of Islamic structures, and more than that, in an unusual number of complexes, some with an equally unusual variety of functions.

Both the Ilkhanids and Timurids, at least until the end of Timur's reign, invested heavily in monumentality. This was partially accompanied by attenuation of proportions, leading to taller and narrower iwans and dome chambers, the latter, in the Timurid period, exaggerated by double domes. It was also accompanied by greatly increased use of tilework, to the point where it could be used to sheathe whole interiors or exteriors in color. The corollary was that now exteriors of large building were meant to be seen. Chinoiserie decoration, only rarely present in Mamluk architecture, and not at all in the Maghrib, was pervasive.

The Tughluqids commanded probably the largest territory of all, although much of their efforts went into protecting it from Mongol incursions and internal feuds. Their peripheral status is shown by their extensive use of Persian, also their literary language, for foundation inscriptions, rather than the Arabic than was standard elsewhere (O'Kane 2009). Nevertheless, their ambitions are shown in the foundation of three separate cities within Dehli by the first three sultans. But this came with a price: the use of more ephemeral building materials, rubble and stucco, permitted fast large-scale construction, but left them at an aesthetic disadvantage that was not compensated for by sheer monumentality. Only in the Punjab, where the available building materials necessitated brick and tile decoration, did they produce a single building (the Rukn-i 'Alam) that was the equal of the finest monuments of their contemporaries.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries mark the period before what has been considered a major turning point in Islamic history, the rise of the three major early modern empires, Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal. Were the earlier centuries of similar import?

The fourteenth century witnessed the remarkable growth of the madrasa, frequently allied to a multifunctional complex, and, except for the Maghrib (because of antipathy to it by the dominant Maliki legal school), a concomitant rise in institutions for Sufis such as *zawiyas* and *khanqahs*. This reflects, especially in the



fifteenth century, the growing blurring of the roles of the ulama and Sufis. Ibn Battuta’s peregrinations in the fourteenth century between the Maghrib and China, either staying in Sufi institutions or gaining employment as a qadi, anticipates this change. Under the Mamluks, Ilkhanids, and Timurids domed dynastic mausoleums were frequently added to these institutions, reflecting both a lingering hostility to individual tombs by the ulema, and the wish to control complexes through family endowments.

The three succeeding dynasties, Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal, each borrowed much from the Timurids, particularly in the decorative arts. The Ottoman vogue for Iznik tiles might not have been so pervasive without the work of an atelier from Tabriz in the fifteenth century (O’Kane 2011). Safavid architecture, although not directly derivative like that of the Uzbeks, owes many of its features to Timurid models. And given that the Mughals still called themselves the Timurids, the continuity in forms of double domed mausoleums, vaulting and decorative motifs is hardly surprising.

### Notes

- 1 The palace was actually referred to as an *istabl* (stable) in the sources.
- 2 The huge scale of these buildings is reflected in the household expenditures of the Mamluks, besides which the construction of a mosque was a modest expenditure: Behrens-Abouseif 2007: 48.
- 3 It has an inscription with a fourteenth-century date, but on stylistic grounds it cannot be other than fifteenth century.
- 4 Here on the ground floor, supplemented in later madrasas by ones on the upper story.
- 5 Even sultans such as Qaytbay and al-Ghawri skewed the surplus to be as much as 90 percent of the *wagf* income: Petry 1998: 57.
- 6 Perhaps because of a restoration inscription added by him: Welch 1989: 190, n. 38.

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